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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6628

INFO AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

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S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 JAKARTA 2022

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR PO ID

SUBJ: PORTUGUESE TIMOR: CONTINGENCY PAPER

REF: JAKARTA 1731

1. INTRODUCTION: WE ARE POUCHING TO DEPARTMENT, LISBON AND CANBERRA UNDER COVER OF AN AIRGRAM A CONTINGENCY PAPER ON COURSES OF ACTION AVAILABLE TO US IN VIEW INDICATIONS THAT INDONESIA IS MAKING ACTIVE EFFORTS TO INCORPORATE PORTUGUESE TIMOR (REFTEL). GIVEN TIME FACTORS INVOLVED, THIS TELEGRAM WILL PRESENT OPERATIVE PORTIONS OF STUDY. END INTRODUCTION.

2. STUDY OPENS WITH BACKGROUND AND CURRENT SITUATION WHICH INCLUDES DESCRIPTION OF REASONS GOI FEELS AN INDEPENDENT TIMOR CONSTITUTES AN UNACCEPTABLE SECURITY RISK, INDONESIA'S APPARENTLY UNSUCCESSFUL ATTEMPTS TO OBTAIN PORTUGUESE COOPERATION IN EFFECTING A TRANSFER OF SOVEREIGNTY, UNLIKELIHOOD OF INDONESIA'S CONVINCING THE PORTUGUESE TIMORESE OF THE VIRTUES OF INTEGRATION, AND DIFFICULTIES INDONESIA WILL FACE IN A MILITARY TAKEOVER IF PORTUGAL DECIDES TO FIGHT; IT CONCLUDES THAT GOI HAS APPARENTLY MADE DECISION TO TAKE TIMOR WITHOUT USE OF FORCE IF POSSIBLE, BUT USING FORCE IF NECESSARY.

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3. BULK OF SECTION ON "POSSIBILITIES AND OPTIONS" FOLLOWS:

4. "WHILE IT WOULD BE TEMPTING TO 'SIT OUT' AN INDONESIAN MOVE TO ACQUIRE PORTUGUESE TIMOR, IN PRACTICAL TERMS THIS IS NOT A FEASIBLE ALTERNATIVE FOR A VARIETY OF REASONS AMONG WHICH:

(A) US IDENTIFICATION WITH GOI, GIVEN LEADING ROLE WE HAVE PLAYED IN FURNISHING ECONOMIC AND MILITARY ASSISTANCE;

(B) VIRTUAL INEVITABILITY THAT, IF INDONESIA USES MILITARY FORCE IN ACQUIRING TIMOR, SOME US GRANT MILITARY EQUIPMENT WILL BE INVOLVED;

(C) EXPECTATION BY AUSTRALIA AND PORTUGAL (UNLESS LATTER HAS TACITLY CONCURRED IN TAKEOVER) THAT US WILL TAKE SOME POSITION AND,

(D) MOST IMPORTANTLY, LIKELY EXPECTATION (HOPE) ON PART OF GOI THAT US WILL UNDERSTAND REASONS FOR INDONESIA'S ACTION AND WILL TAKE RELATIVELY HELPFUL POSTURE. GIVEN IMPORTANCE THE GOI ATTACHES TO TIMOR, AND CURRENT FEELING ON THE PART OF INDONESIA THAT WE ARE TURNING FROM THEM, OUR POSITION ON TIMOR COULD WELL BE REGARDED AS A DECISIVE TEST OF OUR SYMPATHY, AND A PASSIVE POSTURE ON OUR PART MIGHT NOT SUFFICE, IN THE EYES OF GOI. (CONVERSELY, EVEN TO RAISE WITH GOI QUESTION OF US MILITARY EQUIPMENT WOULD CREATE SEVERE DIPLOMATIC PROBLEMS.) INDEED, SHOULD INDONESIA FAIL IN AN ATTEMPT TO EFFECT A SWIFT TAKEOVER, AND FACE THE FRUSTRATIONS OF A PROTRACTED GUERRILLA WAR, THERE WOULD BE A TEMPTATION TO PUT THE BLAME ON UNSYMPATHETIC FOREIGN POWERS -- E.G., THE US--UNLESS WE HAD CLEARLY TAKEN A STAND ACCEPTABLE TO THE GOI.

5. "TWO ADDITIONAL FACTORS MILITATE IN FAVOR OF OUR TAKING A "HELPFUL" POSTURE, WHILE TWO IMPORTANT FACTORS ARE DIFFICULT TO ASSESS FROM THE JAKARTA VANTAGE POINT. FACTORS IN FAVOR OF A HELPFUL POSTURE ARE:

A) GENERAL US OPPOSITION TO CREATION OF ECONOMICALLY AND POLITICALLY WEAK MINI-STATES WITH INDONESIA THE ONLY LOGICAL COUNTRY INTO WHICH TIMOR COULD MERGE; AND,

B) VIRTUAL ABSENCE OF ANY US INTERESTS IN TIMOR.

FACTORS WE CANNOT FULLY EVALUATE ARE:

A) LIKELY PUBLIC AND CONGRESSIONAL OPINION AT HOME; AND
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B) DEGREE OF IMPORTANCE PORTUGAL ATTACHES TO TIMOR, AND WHETHER GOP WILL PRESS US BULATERALLY AND IN INTERNATIONAL FORUMS TO ADOPT A NEGATIVE STANCE TO AN INDONESIAN TAKEOVER.

6. "OUR PROBLEMS IS, THEREFORE, HOW TO REACT TO ANY EVENTUAL INDONESIAN MOVES TOWARD TIMOR IN A WAY THAT WILL PROTECT OUR RELATIONS WITH INDONESIA WHILE TAKING INTO CONSIDERATION US DOMESTIC SENSIBILITIES, THE VIEWS

OF AUSTRALIA AND PORTUGAL (IF PORTUGAL CARES), AND WORLD
OPINION--PARTICULARLY LDCS SUCH AS THE AFRICAN STATES.

7. "AGAINST THIS BACKGROUND, IN FORESEEABLE FUTURE, WE CAN
SEE FIVE LIKELY SITUATIONS EACH OF WHICH PRESENTS US
WITH RANGE OF OPTIONS SOME OF WHICH, WHILE INCLUDED, WOULD
APPEAR NEITHER DESIRABLE NOR LIKELY. THIS STUDY DOES NOT
DEAL WITH UN-MONITORED PLEBISCITE, SINCE IT WOULD GIVE US NO
PROBLEMS.

8. "I. THINGS GO ON AS THEY ARE NOW, WITH PORTUGAL CONTINUING
TO GOVERN TIMOR, REMAINING UNCLEAR AS TO ITS ULTIMATE INTENTIONS,
WHILE INDONESIA TRIES -- PROBABLY WITHOUT MUCH SUCCESS--TO
LAY THE GROUNDWORK FOR PEACEFUL INTEGRATION.

IN THIS SITUATION WE COULD:

A) CONTINUE WITH OUR PRESENT STANCE STATING, IF ASKED, THAT WE
WELCOME DECOLONIZATION OF PORTUGUESE COLONIES AND HOPE THAT A
SOLUTION WILL EMERGE WHICH WILL MEET DESIRES OF LOCAL POPULATION.

B) STATE WE ARE IN FAVOR OF SOME FORM OF POPULAR EXPRESSION OF
WILL--E.G., A REFERENDUM--AND THAT WE HOPE THIS WILL
TAKE PLACE, ETC.

C) STATE WE HOPE TO SEE A SOLUTION SATISFACTORY TO ALL CONCERNED,
ADDING IMPLICITLY OR EXPLICITLY THAT INDEPENDENCE IS NOT ONLY
CHOICE AND THAT ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL VIABILITY OF A UNIT MUST
BE CONSIDERED.

D) GO EVEN FURTHER AND STATE MERGER WITH INDONESIA SEEMS
A DESIRABLE COURSE.

E) IN ANY OF THE ABOVE COURSES WE COULD COUPLE OUR OVERT POSITION
(OR LACK THEREOF) WITH (1) CONSULTATIONS WITH PORTUGAL IN HOPES
OF ARRIVING AT A SOLUTION WHICH WOULD AVOID INDONESIA'S
RESORTING TO AGGRESSIVE MEASURES; AND/OR (2) A QUIET DEMARCHE
TO GOI COUNSELING THAT THEY MAKE EVERY EFFORT TO AVOID
RECOURSE TO MILITARY ACTION; OR (3) WE CAN SIMPLY NOT INVOLVE
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OURSELVES DIPLOMATICALLY.

9. "II. INDONESIA REACHES CONCLUSION THAT AGREEMENT WITH PORTUGAL
IS NOT IN CARDS, THAT PORTUGAL IS GOING COMMUNIST--OR THAT PORTUGAL
IS HEADING TOWARDS A GRANT OF INDEPENDENCE TO TIMOR--AND, THERE-
FORE, DECIDES A MILITARY TAKEOVER IS NECESSARY BUT HAS NOT YET
IMPLEMENTED THIS DECISION. EITHER THE GOI INFORMS US CONFIDENTIALLY
IN ADVANCE, ASKING OUR UNDERSTANDING, OR WE LEARN OF THE PLANS
FROM AUTHORITATIVE SOURCES.

OUR MAJOR CHOICE WOULD BE WHETHER TO INVOLVE OURSELVES
AT THIS STAGE OR NOT. AMONG THE COURSES OF ACTION AVAILABLE WOULD BE:

A) COUNSEL INDONESIA PRIVATELY AGAINST SUCH AN ACTION, WARNING OF
LIKELY DAMAGE TO INDONESIA'S IMAGE, BILATERAL RELATIONS, ETC.

B) IN CONCERT WITH AUSTRALIA TAKE SAME ACTION AS IN A).

C) CONSULT WITH INDONESIA AND PORTUGAL (WITH OUR WITHOUT

AUSTRALIA) IN AN ATTEMPT TO FIND A BETTER SOLUTION.
D) WARN INDONESIA THAT A MILITARY TAKEOVER CANNOT GO UNNOTICED
IN THE US AND THAT BILATERAL RELATIONS, INCLUDING ASSISTANCE
(IF THERE STILL IS ANY), COULD BE AFFECTED.
E) TELL THE GOI WE CAN UNDERSTAND THEIR RATIONALE AND WILL
NOT ACTIVELY OPPOSE A TAKEOVER.
F) DO NOTHING.

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10. "III. INDONESIA AND PORTUGAL REACH AGREEMENT RE INTEGRATION
WITHOUT BENEFIT OF ANY BROADLY BASED CONSULTATION WITH THE POR-
TUGUESE TIMORESE. THERE IS THE POSSIBILITY (OR ACTUALITY) OF
LOCAL RESISTANCE TO THE TURNOVER OF AUTHORITY. WHILE THE AR-
RANGEMENT OF ITSELF CAUSES NO PROBLEM IN US-INDONESIAN OR US-
PORTUGUESE RELATIONS, THERE IS A LOUD OUTCRY IN US LIBERAL
CIRCLES, AUSTRALIA AND THE LDC.

CHOICES AVAILABLE ARE MUCH SAME AS THOSE IN II ABOVE, IF
INDONESIAN-PORTUGUESE AGREEMENT HAS NOT BEEN
IMPLEMENTED. IF A TAKEOVER IS BEING OR HAS BEEN EFFECTED,
WE WOULD--AFTER ESTIMATING DEPTH OF REACTION AT HOME, IN AUSTRALIA
AND THE DEVELOPING WORLD, ETC--HAVE TO CONSIDER WHICH OF FOLLOWING
COURSES OF ACTION (OR COMBINATION THEREOF) TO TAKE (EXTREME
COURSES SUCH AS A THREAT TO BREAK RELATIONS ARE NOT INCLUDED):
A) ISSUE A STRONG (OR MILD) STATEMENT OF PROTEST CALLING FOR
A RETURN TO STATUS QUO ANTE.
C) THREATEN TO, OR ACTUALLY SUSPEND MILITARY AND/OR
ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE.

D) ALONE, OR IN CONCERT WITH OTHERS, COUNSEL INDONESIA TO REVERSE ITS COURSE OF ACTION.

E) BASICALLY HEDGE, STATING WE HOPE PEACE WILL BE RESTORED (IF THERE IS ANY EVIDENCE), THAT WILL OF THE PEOPLE WILL BE RESPECTED, ETC.

F) BASICALLY HEDGE, STATE WE DEPLORE VIOLENCE, LOSS OF LIFE, ETC., BUT NOTE THAT GIVEN UNVIABILITY OF MINI-STATES, ETHNIC SIMI-SECRET

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LARITIES OF PEOPLE ON BOTH SIDES IN TIMOR, ETC., MERGER MAY BE BEST SOLUTION.

G) DO NOTHING.

11. "IV. UNREST BREAKS OUT IN PORTUGUESE TIMOR AND ALONG THE BORDER WITH INDONESIAN TIMOR, WITH GENERAL SUSPICION THAT INDONESIA HAS FOMENTED TROUBLES. PRO-MERGER FORCES PROCLAIM THEMSELVES MAJORITY AND CALL ON INDONESIA TO COME IN TO STOP BLOODSHED. INDONESIA OBLIGES AND MANAGES TAKEOVER WITHOUT MUCH (OR WITH CONSIDERABLE) VIOLENCE, FOLLOWED IN SHORT ORDER BY A STAGE-MANAGED "PLEBISCITE" OR SOME OTHER "ACT OF FREE CHOICE" LEADING TO MERGER. THERE IS A HUE AND CRY IN DEVELOPING WORLD, PORTUGAL, AUSTRALIA, AND IN CERTAIN US CIRCLES.

IN MAKING A DECISION AS TO WHAT TO DO WE WOULD WANT TO DETERMINE EXTENT OF US DOMESTIC REACTION, AND TO CONSULT WITH PORTUGAL AND AUSTRALIA TO ASCERTAIN THEIR VIEWS WHILE ALSO TURNING AN EAR TO WHATEVER THE USSR AND THE LDCS MIGHT BE SAYING. CHOICES AVAILABLE WOULD BE SIMILAR TO THOSE IN CASE OF TAKEOVER NOTED IN III ABOVE.

12. "V. FOR WHATEVER REASON (INCLUDING FEAR OF A PLEBISCITE), THE GOI DECIDES THAT ITS INTERESTS REQUIRE A SWIFT MILITARY TAKEOVER. IN GOA-LIKE FASHION, INDONESIAN MILITARY FORCES INVADE PORTUGUESE TIMOR, WINNING AFTER SOME (OR A LITTLE, OR A GREAT DEAL OF) LOSS OF LIFE AMONG THE DEFENDING PORTUGUESE AND LOCAL POPULATION. OR, IN WORST POSSIBLE CASE, INDONESIAN MILITARY FORCES INVADE PORTUGUESE TIMOR, WINNING DILI AND SOME OF OTHER MAJOR TOWNS, BUT ARE UNABLE TO TAKE MOUNTAINS AND BACK COUNTRY AREAS, LEADING TO A MESSY GUERRILLA WAR WHICH, WELL PUBLICIZED, POISONS INDONESIA'S IMAGE WORLD-WIDE EVEN MORE THAN WOULD A SWIFT TAKEOVER.

PRELIMINARY REVIEW WE WOULD WANT TO TAKE, AND CHOICES AVAILABLE TO US WOULD BE SIMILAR TO THOSE IN IV ABOVE. NOTE: IN CHOOSING OPTIONS DEALING WITH USE OF FORCE BY INDONESIA EMPLOYING US MAP EQUIPMENT, WE WOULD NEED TO ASSUME A SUBSTANTIAL OUTCRY FROM OPPONENTS OF MILITARY AID IN CONGRESS. DIPLOMATIC ACTION IN SUCH A CASE COULD WELL BECOME NECESSARY, ALTHOUGH IT WOULD BE AT THE RISK OF SERIOUS DAMAGE TO OUR RELATIONS WITH INDONESIA. THE FACTS OF THE MATTER ARE, AS FAR AS WE CAN JUDGE HERE, HOWEVER, THAT TERMS OF OUR MILITARY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM WOULD NOT SPECIFICALLY PREVENT THE INDONEISANS FROM USING SUCH EQUIPMENT IN

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A TIMOR OPERATION. (STUDY DEALS IN DETAIL WITH TECHNICALITIES THIS QUESTION.)

13. FULL TEXT OF STUDY'S CONCLUSION FOLLOWS:

"TAKING AS ASSUMPTIONS:

A) US PUBLIC AND CONGRESSIONAL REACTION TO A (NOT TOO VIOLENT) TAKEOVER OF PORTUGUESE TIMOR BY ETHNICALLY SIMILAR PEOPLE WOULD NOT BE TOO ADVERSE (THE SLOWER AND MESSIER THE TAKEOVER, THE MORE ADVERSE THE REACTION WE MUST EXPECT).
B) US INTERESTS IN INDONESIA ARE IMPORTANT; IN TIMOR VIRTUALLY NIL;
C) PORTUGAL MIGHT NOT WELCOME A UNILATERAL INDONESIAN TAKEOVER BUT WOULD NOT GO SO FAR AS TO THREATEN MAJOR REPRISALS AGAINST US (NATO INTEREST, ETC.) SHOULD WE NOT TAKE AN ANTI-INDONESIAN STANCE:
D) AUSTRALIA, WHILE UNHAPPY, WILL LIMIT ITSELF TO EXPRESSIONS OF DISMAY AND WILL NOT PERMANENTLY TERMINATE ASSISTANCE OR TAKE THE MATTER TO THE UN;
E) SIMILARLY LDCS OF IMPORTANCE TO THE US WOULD NOT MAKE OUR POSITION ON TIMOR A MAJOR DECIDING FACTOR IN BILATERAL RELATIONS;
F) A POST-TAKEOVER INDONESIAN ADMINISTRATION WOULD BE RELATIVELY BENIGN. US INTERESTS WOULD CALL FOR OUR TAKING THE MILDEST APPROACH IN EACH SITUATION WHICH CIRCUMSTANCES--INCLUDING US AND WORLD OPINION--WOULD PERMIT. FOR PRESENT BEST POSITION APPEARS TO BE ONE OF MAXIMUM SILENCE. GIVEN SUHARTO'S CHARACTER, IT IS UNLIKELY THAT GOI WOULD MOVE UNILATERALLY UNLESS IT FELT THERE WAS NO OTHER WAY; HENCE ANY COURSES SUGGESTING WE COUNSEL INDONESIA TO "CEASE AND DESIST" FROM ITS REPORTED PLANNING FOR A MILITARY TAKEOVER (UNLESS COUPLED WITH FIRM ASSURANCES THAT PORTUGAL WOULD COOPERATE IN A PEACEFUL TRANSFER) WOULD ONLY SERVE TO EXACERBATE RELATIONS. SHOULD INDONESIA ACTUALLY EMBARK UPON AN AGGRESSIVE COURSE OF ACTION TO ACQUIRE PORTUGUESE TIMOR, WE WOULD, AFTER WEIGHING THE IMPLICATIONS OF US DOMESTIC AND CONGRESSIONAL VIEWS, PORTUGUESE GOVERNMENT REACTIONS AND OTHER RELEVANT FACTORS SUCH AS THE REACTIONS OF AUSTRALIA AND THE LDCS, TAKE POSITION MOST LIKELY TO AVOID SERIOUS DAMAGE TO THE US-INDONESIAN RELATIONSHIP. WE WOULD AVOID TO EXTENT POSSIBLE ACTIONS (SUCH AS SUSPENDING MAP) OR STATEMENTS WHICH REFLECT CRITICISM OF GOI AND WOULD, IF AT ALL POSSIBLE, GO SO FAR AS TO STATE (OR IMPLY) THAT LONG-TERM TIMORESE INTERESTS ARE BEST SERVED BY INTEGRATION INTO INDONESIA, WITHOUT ACTUALLY ENDORSING INDONESIA'S AGGRESSIVE ACTIONS."

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